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To what extent can the number of store visitors be increased by marketing?

Case Vero Moda Iso Omena

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<p>The number of high-street fashion chains and popularity of online shopping have increased strongly in Finland. This has resulted to a problem of decline in number of store visitors in Vero Moda, located in shopping center Iso Omena, Espoo. This Bachelor's thesis examines the reasons for the decline, tries to resolve the best channels of marketing to reach Vero Moda Iso Omena's customers and the most effective promotions in addition to research the fact that to what extent the amount of store visitors can be increased by marketing tools.</p> <p>The Thesis was compiled by comparing the number store visitors and turnover of the store in 2011 and 2012. Additionally a questionnaire was compiled in the Vero Moda Iso Omena store. The research shows that marketing does affect the turnover of the store more than the number of store visitors. According to the research the most effective communication tools are Facebook, customer club and the shop. The research showed that the number of customer club members was not that high and therefore it should increase the number of members to reach their customers.</p> <p>Moreover the thesis includes a promotion plan based on the research findings that consist of an activity calendar and a marketing communication plan for a period of March 2013 to June 2013 for Vero Moda Iso Omena.</p>	
Keywords	

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1 Introduction

This Bachelor Thesis discusses the problems of a specific fashion store, Vero Moda, located in shopping mall Iso Omena, Espoo. The store had discovered the problem of decline in visitor numbers over the year 2012 and asked for reasons behind the decline. In order to reach the highest number of potential store visitors this research aims to discover the most effective marketing communication tools in addition to a plan where these tools are implemented.

The research firstly introduces the problem statement and client and then goes through the methodology used for the research. Chapter 2, the literature review, familiarises the current situation of the Finnish Fashion market and the retailers. As well as marketing communication tools and customer loyalty and equity are reviewed.

The results of the questionnaire are presented in Chapter 3 and further analysed in Chapter 4. As a preliminary research a chart of visitors and turnover was compiled (Appendix 1) and the chart and its findings are analysed in more depth. This research additionally provides a marketing activity and communication plan as a recommendation for the client.

The research was implemented in close operation with the client organisation and tailored according to their wishes. The acknowledgements go to Bestseller and especially Essi Leppänen, store manager of Vero Moda Iso Omena, for fluent cooperation and access to data which was crucial to success of this research.

1.1 Problem statement

The company wishes to find the most effective marketing communication tools in order to increase the number of store visitors.

Vero Moda, located in the shopping center, Iso Omena, Espoo, Finland has had the problem of declining number of store visitors in the year 2012. There has been 6% less visitors in Vero Moda Iso Omena in 2012 than in 2011, see appendix one. The number of store visitors is directly related to sales and turnover of the store and naturally as the visitors have declined so has the sales. There are number of reasons behind the decline but most importantly is the number of competition as many clothing chains have emerged to the Finnish market. Additionally the usage of online stores has risen. Previously Vero Moda was the leading high-street fashion brand in the Finnish market but gradually has lost its position to other high-street fashion brands such as H&M, Gina Tricot, Cubus & Zara. In an inquiry executed by The Voice, a Finnish radio station, it was discovered that Vero Moda had dropped to the third position in the most popular clothing chains in Finland among 18-44 year old consumers. H&M took the first position as the second most popular chain was Gina Tricot among age group 18-24 and Seppälä, a Finnish clothing chain, among age group 24-44.

Vero Moda brand is directed to 20-35 year old trend-conscious young women who seek affordable quality. Whereas, in Iso Omena, most of the customers in Vero Moda fall to age category 18-25. While marketing activities are designed, the age category is taken into account and at the moment Vero Moda uses Facebook and Customer Club as its main communication channels to customers. Therefore as the age distribution is slightly different in Vero Moda Iso Omena than the focus group of the brand, the company should reconsider the marketing communication tools used. Social Media is the new channel of communication to young people and one could assume that consumers would be reached through twitter, facebook and instagram. Therefore it is important to discover the best marketing communication and activities that suit for Vero Moda Iso Omena customers in order to reach the highest number of consumers possible.

Bestseller Retail Finland Oy's marketing department designs local campaigns and promotions for Vero Moda chain stores. Additionally shopping centers in which the stores are located in have events where stores independently can come up with a promotion.

Since the customers and markets are different in shopping centers and cities that the stores are located in, the campaigns and promotions designed for the whole chain might not be the most efficient ones. Additionally it is crucial to use the right marketing tools in order to reach the biggest number of customers.

In 2012 Vero Moda Iso Omena executed numerous marketing activities. Product campaigns that are mutual to the whole chain across Finland, shopping center activities and independent events designed and executed only in Vero Moda Iso Omena. The most commonly used marketing channels are Vero Moda Finland –facebook page, Customer Club –messages and shopping center advertising. In most of the cases the number of visitors has increased while marketing activities have been executed but not always. Hence the problem in Vero Moda Iso Omena is to find the most effective marketing tools and communication methods to reach their customers in order to increase the number of visitors and serve their customers' needs in the best way possible. When the customers are reached in the most effective way and served properly in the store, it will have a positive effect on the turnover.

1.2 Client organisation

Bestseller is a fashion manufacturer and retailer founded in Denmark in 1975 by Merete Bech Povlsen and Troels Holch Povlsen. Their son, Anders Holch Povlsen, is now the CEO and the sole owner of the \$3.2 billion (sales) company (Forbes, 2013). Bestseller operates in 46 different countries in Europe, Middle-East, Asia and Canada with a portfolio of 12 different clothing brands: JACK & JONES, JUNAROSE, MAMALICIOUS, NAME IT, OBJECT COLLECTORS ITEM, ONLY, OUTFITTERS NATION, PIECES, SELECTED, VERO MODA and VILA CLOTHES. The products are sold through approx. 3,000 chain stores and 12,000 external multi-brand stores (Bestseller, 2013).

Vero Moda is one of the first brands launched by Bestseller and still today remains the largest. In 1989 it was created by Troels Holch Povlsen, other founder of Bestseller, to meet the needs of young women looking for on-trend, quality garments at affordable prices. The brand offers quality, affordability and inspiration to young women who want to dress well and follow trends. Over the years Vero Moda has used some of the greatest supermodels such as Christy Turlington, Kate Moss and Alexa Chung as faces of the brand to creating the brand image and to attracting young consumers (Bestsell-

er, 2013). Vero Moda is one of the largest clothing brands in the European markets as well as in the Finnish markets where it emerges in 1990. However during the recent years it has lost its market share in the Finnish market as already mentioned.

Bestseller is divided in to two different independent organisations in the Finnish Market, Bestseller Retail Finland Oy and Bestseller Wholesale Finland Oy. The two organisations are both subsidiaries of Bestseller and work closely together but operate as independent limited companies. BSR Retail Finland Oy owns most of the stores operating in Finland and operates the sales of different brands. BSR Wholesale Finland Oy imports the Bestseller products to Finland and delivers them to BSR Retail Finland Oy and other retailers such as franchisers and department store chains.

Bestseller headquarters in Denmark are responsible of the main marketing policies and provide local subsidiaries with visual packages of marketing materials they can use, such as spokespersons, pictures and advertisements. The marketing department in Bestseller additionally designs certain product campaign as well the visual marketing of the stores. For example every Vero Moda brand store looks the same in Europe and in Asia. In addition the different product themes are designed in the headquarters. At a local level small product campaigns and customer club offers or discounts are executed by BSR Wholesale Finland Oy while BSR Retail Finland Oy is responsible of events or promotional activities in the stores. Additionally the stores themselves can create marketing activities by themselves. For example most of the stores organise VIP events for their customer club members and participate in activities that are organised by the shopping center they are located in.

The most important communication tools used by Vero Moda are the Customer club and Facebook page Vero Moda Finland. The customer club called Member's Club works so that customers can fill their contact details in the shop and they are given a member club card. After they are registered to the member club database, they will receive e-mails or txt-messages from the member's club about product-campaigns, promotions, discounts or events. Every shop have their own database of members and usually the messages are common for all shops but some events are shop specific and then only the members of the certain shop will receive the message. The Vero Moda Finland Facebook page offers similar information for the fans as the member's club mailings;

information about novelties, product campaigns and shop specific events. There are currently 31,472 fans on the page (<http://www.facebook.com/VEROMODA.Finland?fref=ts>). A lot of the communication is also done in the shops. There are marketing materials for product campaigns in the shops and the sales personnel is furthermore an important source of information for the visitors. High level of service is one of the competitive advantages that Vero Moda shops have when comparing to competitors. In most high street fashion shops there is not actual personal service elsewhere but in the cashier but in Vero Moda shops personal service is highly important. This give additional value to the visitors as the sales personnel is there to serve and style your outfit and not just to collect your money on the cashier.

1.3 Aims of the research

The purpose of this study is to determine to what extend can marketing tools affect the number of store visitors. The study aims to discover what kind of marketing actions are effective in Vero Moda Iso Omena in addition to finding the most efficient marketing communication tools to reach more customers. If the study accomplishes to find efficient marketing tools, Vero Moda Iso Omena can use this information to increase the number of store visitors and therefore increase their market share and sales.

As Vero Moda Iso Omena wishes to improve its' result for the upcoming financial year this research aims to find out what is the impact of marketing to the number of store visitors. It is assumed that there is a direct relationship the research additionally aims to discover the most efficient marketing channels, most effective promotions and campaigns for Vero Moda Iso Omena, should the stores have more individually tailored campaigns for their customers as well as what kind of campaigns and promotions the customers of Vero Moda Iso Omena want from the store. Most importantly the research aims to find out how could the number of store visitors be increased. Additionally the study aims to present the client organisation with beneficial recommendations and results in order for them to increase sales.

As this study is important to one store of the Vero Moda chain in order for them to improve their results it is as important to the whole chain and the parent company Bestseller Retail Finland Oy. As already mentioned Vero Moda has dropped their market share in the past few years and it is vital to gain back the position of the most

popular clothing chain in the Finnish market among young women consumers. With the right marketing strategy and communication channels the company will be able to reach more potential buyers and

1.4 Methodology

The study aims to discover what kind of marketing actions are effective in Vero Moda Iso Omena in addition to finding the most efficient marketing communications to reach more customers.

The primary research question of this study will be:

1. To what extent the amount of store visitors can be increased by marketing tools?

In addition the research will also study:

1. Why is the number of store visitors declining?
2. What are the best channels of marketing to reach Vero Moda Iso Omena's customers?
3. What are the most effective promotions in Vero Moda Iso Omena?
4. How does marketing affect the turnover of the store?
5. Should the stores have more individually tailored promotions?
6. What do the customers of VM Iso Omena wish from the store?
7. How could the store increase the number of store visitors?

1.4.1 Population and Sampling

The population for this study is defined as all customers who visit Vero Moda Iso Omena during the sample time frame. In 2012 during week 7 VM Iso Omena had 2206 visitors (Appendix 1). To represent the population of Vero Moda Iso Omena visitors a simple random sample was used. In other words, every member of the population, VM Iso Omena visitors, had the equal chance of selection (Kotler & Armstrong, 2008). The ones who were chosen to answer the questionnaire were randomly picked from the visitors of the store. The sample included visitors who purchased and not purchase products since the fact that whether they did or did not buy was not relevant, whereas the questionnaire handles marketing communication of Vero Moda.

Kotler and Armstrong define sample as a segment of the population selected for marketing research to represent the population as a whole. In this research the sample is the visitors who answered the questionnaire during the specific timeframe, 11.2-17.2.2013. The Research gained 20 filled questionnaire forms and they were all usable and correctly filled out. 20 may seem as a small sample size for a questionnaire since it only represents around 1 % of weekly visitors in Vero Moda Iso Omena. Additionally the researcher and the client had already made hypothesis about the results and agreed that a small sample would give them an enough sufficient result.

Sampling plan

Who? Vero Moda Iso Omena visitors during 11.2-17.2.2013

How many? At least 20 responses

How? Randomly selected visitors of VM Iso Omena filled a questionnaire in the shop

1.4.2 Instrumentation

A questionnaire was used as an instrument for this survey. The questionnaire can be found in Finnish and in English in Appendix 2. Reason for this instrument was that the research problem and research questions that the client organisation wanted answers, were easily transformed into specific questions. It was clear that the answers needed for this survey needed to come directly from the visitors of Vero Moda Iso Omena. Interviews would have been another instrument for the survey but the client specifically requested for quantitative results and those a questionnaire can give. Additionally a questionnaire offers flexibility in tailoring the questions. The client wished for quantitative results but additionally opinions of the visitors. According to Kotler & Armstrong (2008) questionnaires with open-end questions useful in exploratory research, when trying to find out what people think rather than measuring how many people think. An online questionnaire would have also provided quantitative results and may have resulted to a wider sample size. The researcher and the client however decided to implement the survey in the Vero Moda Iso Omena shop in order to reach specifically the shop visitors.

The questionnaire consisted of 10 questions, please see Appendix 2. They were worded by the researcher on the basis of what the client wished to find out about the marketing communication of Vero Moda Iso Omena.

The first question "Which age category do you belong to?" was set to determine the average age of a Vero Moda Iso Omena visitor. Additionally the research wished to define whether there is a relationship between the communication channels and age group. The age groups were A) under 15 B) 15 to 19 years C) 20 to 24 years D) 25 to 29 years E) 30 to 34 years F) 35 to 39 years G) 40+ years. Since the target group of Vero Moda brand is 23-38 the research also wished to find out do the visitors of VM Iso Omena fall to these categories as well.

The second question "How often do you visit Vero Moda Iso Omena?" tried to determine how often does the average visitor of VM Iso Omena come to the shop and is there a relationship between the frequency of visits to the fact that they follow newsletter, advertisement etc. of Vero Moda. Furthermore the client wished to know, are most of the visitors frequent visitors or just random pass buyers of the shop.

"Are you a member of the Vero Moda Iso Omena Member's club?" and "Do you follow the newsletters, text messages coming from the VM member's club?" were questions that were related to each other. Firstly the research wished to define how many of the visitors actually belong to the Vero Moda Iso Omena Member's club system. Since the Member's club is the main channel of communication of Vero Moda brand the research wanted to determine do the members follow the newsletters and text messages that communicate the promotions, discounts, novelties etc. to the members. This also determined if there is a relationship between memberships and actually gaining some information since the last questions tries to determine has the communication of previous promotions been effective.

Facebook has become very important for every marketer and it is cost efficient and little time consuming communication tool and therefore the client wished to know are the visitors facebook fans of Vero Moda Finland. The next question "Where do you get the information about campaigns, promotions or event in Vero Moda shops?" studies if there is a relationship between member's club membership or Facebook-fan to the source of information. This is one of the most important questions in the questionnaire since it determines where do visitors get the information and therefore indicates what the communication tool is where Vero Moda should focus on.

The next question is also rather important since it determines what sort of promotions the visitors wish to see in Vero Moda Iso Omena. The respondents could choose from simple discounts to options more special, such as VIP-nights or celebrity guests. This question gives an answer whether the visitors want more special, specific promotions from the shop or is the most motivating factor discounts. The next question "What makes you return to Vero Moda Iso Omena?" is an open question and gave the respondent the chance of expressing their opinion on what is good about Vero Moda Iso Omena. The client wished for open opinion on this matter in addition to the fact that is there a relationship between answers given here and the membership or Facebook matter. The following question "What would make you visit the shop more often?" seeks to find out if there is something to be done differently. The options given in this question were all actions that the Vero Moda Iso Omena shop can influence themselves and improve. The last question of the questionnaire determines if the communication of last few promotions executed in Vero Moda Iso Omena have been successful.

In addition to the questionnaire that was implemented, the table (Appendix 1) was constructed by the researcher in order to demonstrate the problem Vero Moda Iso Omena is facing: the declining number of visitors. The table moreover presents the relationship between marketing activity and visitors. The table was collated from the sales and visitor numbers provided by Vero Moda Iso Omena. The table will be presented and analysed in more depth in chapter 3 Results.

1.4.3 Procedure and Timeframe

The questionnaire was distributed in the Vero Moda Iso Omena shop for a period of seven days starting from 11th of February to 17th of February in 2013. The questionnaire was in Finnish. The sales personnel randomly asked visitors to fill out the questionnaire and provided shortly information about the purpose of the questionnaire. The visitors who agreed to answer the questionnaire were not given any incentive and it took them approximately five minutes to complete.

1.4.4 Analysis Plan

The primary research question of this study will be:

1. To what extent the amount of store visitors can be increased by marketing tools?

The research as a whole attempts to answer this question through theoretical substantiation, questionnaire findings and research on sales figures and number of visitors and point out that there is a relationship between marketing and the number of visitors.

In addition the research will also study:

1. Why is the number of store visitors declining?
2. What are the best channels of marketing to reach Vero Moda Iso Omena's customers?
3. What are the most effective promotions in Vero Moda Iso Omena?
4. How does marketing affect the turnover of the store?
5. Should the stores have more individually tailored promotions?
6. What do the customers of VM Iso Omena wish from the store?
7. How could the store increase the number of store visitors?

These questions will be answered by the results gained from the questionnaire.

1.4.5 Validity and reliability

Face validity was assessed by pre-testing the questionnaire with two salespersons of Vero Moda Iso Omena and one person who was not part of the personnel of the shop but an external person. All the pre-testers understood and interpreted the questions correctly and did not have additional questions.

Content validity was mainly assessed by the client and therefore provides adequate coverage of the topic. The questionnaire asks the questions that the client wished to know and is thus valid. In addition to the content was constructed from the problems (research questions) the shop was having.

This research has construct validity due to the fact that the questionnaire was constructed in a way it would answer the client's questions simply and directly. The questions were constructed in cooperation with the client to receive useful answers. Additionally the construct of the questionnaire allows the research to study the relationships between different factors of the research, for example age group and preferred communication tool.

Reliability was assessed by establishing that the survey is repeatable and stable. The questionnaire could have been implemented by any given timeframe and would have provided similar results.

1.4.6 Assumptions and Limitations

The following assumptions were made while compiling this research:

- The sample of the research represents the population of this study
- The questionnaire questions represent the research questions and will give beneficial results
- The visitors who answered the questionnaire understood the questions correctly and were truthful in their answers

The following limitations were considered while compiling this research:

- The sample size was relatively small
- The time frame for this research was short
- The respondents might have misunderstood the questions or had time constraints
- The research used quantitative research method which is useful for large samples. As the sample size was small a qualitative approach might have given a different result
- Since the research only applied to the visitors of Vero Moda Iso Omena, recommendations and results may not be applicable to the whole chain

2 Literature Review

Fashion Retailers in the Finnish Market

The Fashion Markets in Finland is the playground of chain stores. A few big international retailers have emerged and taken over the 1,8 billion women's clothing markets in the Finnish street view (Kilpailu- ja kuluttajavirasto, 2007). The biggest player is the Swedish clothing empire H&M with a 10% market share of the Finnish clothing markets (Helsingin sanomat, 2011) followed by Danish Bestseller, the owner of Vero Moda, the Varner Group with the brands Cubus, BikBok and Carlings and a few other chains such

as Mango, Zara owned by Inditex and Gina Tricot. Not only but 15 years ago were the Finnish clothing markets run by domestic retailers such as Stockmann and L-Fashion Group and in even earlier days many companies had their production in Finland. In the beginning of the 2000's the structure of the Finnish fashion markets were complete different compared to other Nordic countries. The biggest fashion retailers were department stores such as Stockmann, Anttila and Hypermarkets Prisma and K-Citymarket. However after the emerge of H&M to the markets 16 years ago in 1997 the European clothing chains have been emerging and keep on growing their market shares. The Finnish markets are small but there is plenty room for growth since only the Portuguese spend more money on clothes in Europe than the Finns (Talouselämä, 2004). After all, we have four seasons and need clothes for all of them.

This leads down to Bestseller and Vero Moda in the Finnish clothing markets. Vero Moda brand was launched in 1990 and a decade later it straddled to the beaches of the Baltic Sea and Finland. It shortly took the place as a leading chain store for women and already in 2004 grew its sales with around 20% (Talouselämä 2004). This leading position has been threatened over the past few years with a multiple emerge of new competitors and with the rising popularity of online shopping. Only in the past two years four new high-street fashion chains have appeared to the Finnish markets: BikBok, Cubus, Cos and New Yorker. Therefore as the Finnish high-street fashion consumer seeks for newest trends with the lowest price, no wonder that the competition is fierce. Since these newcomers have decided to come to Finland it clearly indicates that there is room for growth and potential. The question is merely more in who gets the customers. Is it the new trendy high-street brands who attract customers from the old players or can the old brands lure their customers back and attract still new ones.

Marketing communications

Kotler and Armstrong (2008) define marketing as the process which companies create value for customers and build strong customer relationships in order to capture value from customer in return. To put it in more simple form marketing is about satisfying customer needs and gain profits from it. When the marketer understands customer needs then they can develop products and services that provide superior value to the customer, additionally they can price, distribute and promote the products effectively

and therefore they will sell easily. According to a management guru Peter Drucker, "The aim of marketing is to make selling unnecessary" (Kotler & Armstrong, 2008). Marketing is moreover about creating a competitive advantage and competitive advantage is when you have something that competition does not have and the customers want. Before you can do this, you have to know what it is that customers want. For example we all need clothes but we want the camouflage patterned sweater because it is trendy. Then when we want the sweater and want to buy it, it becomes a demand for the markets.

The most visible instrument of the marketing mix is promotion or marketing communications (De Pelsmacker, Geuens, Van den Bergh, 2004) and can also be referred as the communications mix. It involves the means by which the company communicates to its target group to promote their products or the company as a whole. Kotler and Armstrong (2008) divide the Promotion mix to four different instruments; advertising, personal selling, sales promotion, public relations and direct marketing. According to the book Marketing communications by De Pelsmacker, Geuens, Van den Bergh (2004) there are more instruments to the promotion mix and they are described as follows. Advertising is non-personal mass communication that uses mass media, such as tv, radio, magazines, and the content of the advertisement is paid for and clearly identified by the sender, the company. Sales promotions are campaigns that stimulate sales, such as free samples, discounts, competitions, loyalty programs and price cuts. Sponsorship indicates that the company, sponsor, provides funds, goods, services to the sponsee who will help the company with communicational objectives such as building brand awareness and reinforce corporate image. Usually sports, arts, media, education, science and television programs can be sponsored. Public relations consist of all the communications a company initiates with its audience or stakeholders. Press releases and conferences, which are the major public relations tools, should generate publicity. Publicity is impersonal mass communication in mass media, but it is not paid by the company and the content is written by journalist and therefore the company cannot interfere with the tone of the publicity. Point-of-purchase or Point-of-sale communications are communications happening at the point of sales (i.e. the shop). It can include different tools such as displays, advertising in the shop, merchandising and store layout. Exhibitions and trade fairs are tool, mostly used in business-to-business and industrial markets, for contacting prospects, users and purchasers. Direct market-

ing communications are a personal and direct way to communicate with customer and potential clients. Personalised brochures, flyers and leaflets, direct mailings, direct response advertising and telemarketing actions are examples of direct marketing communications. Personal selling is the oral communication and presentation that the sales personnel give when selling the good or service of the company. It is the personal contact between a company representative and the potential client. Finally the internet offers ways to communicate interactively with different stakeholders and, together with e-commerce, combines communicating with selling. When marketing communication is directed to certain known and individually addressed persons, it is called personal communications. It consists mainly on personal selling and direct and interactive marketing communications from the promotional tools mentioned above. All other tools are mass communications. This means that the message is communicated to number of receivers that cannot be identified by using mass media to reach a wide audience.

According to De Pelsmacker, Geuens, Van den Bergh (2004) there are number of factors why companies are integrating marketing and corporate communications and creating new means of marketing; loss of faith in mass media advertising, low levels of brand differentiations, overlapping audiences, need to build more customer loyalty and move towards relationship marketing. It has become commonly believed that mass media communications are less effective. There is such a clutter of media and advertising, the pressure becomes higher and higher. This can lead to a situation where the audience gets irritated and avoids advertising and therefore traditional advertising is not able to attract the attention of potential buyers or convince consumers. This again leads to the need of new means of communication and advertising, more customised communications for narrower markets and more specialized approach. Additionally most markets in developed countries are mature and for that reason a lot of products and brands have the same quality. While there is a low level of brand differentiation, the need for differentiation in communication increases. Therefore the book, *Marketing communications* (De Pelsmacker, Geuens, Van den Bergh, 2004), argue that marketing communications will be the only sustainable competitive advantage of marketing organisations. Kotler and Armstrong (2008) similarly point out the change from mass market communication to more focused marketing programs designed to build closer relationships with customers. They state that the shift toward segmented marketing has a lot due to the major development in the communications technology. Even

though TV, magazines and other mass media channels remain advertisers are adding a selection of more narrow, targeted and highly specialized media to reach smaller segments with a more specialized message.

Customer Loyalty and Equity

The Principles of Marketing book (Kotler & Armstrong, 2008) define customer lifetime value as the value of the entire stream of purchases that a customer would make over a life time of patronage. Therefore if a company loses a customer, it does not only lose a single sale but an entire stream of purchases the customer would make. Creating customer loyalty is very crucial to companies as when a customer is satisfied, they remain loyal and talk favorable to others about the company but according to Kotler and Armstrong (2008) studies show big differences in loyalty of customers who are less satisfied, fairly satisfied and fully satisfied. Therefore customer relationship management should not just create satisfaction but customer delight. As customer delight creates an emotional relationship with the customer and the product or service and not just a rational preference. Retaining customers and gaining loyalty makes economic sense since even if a single purchase of a loyal customer might not be as large, if they keep returning to you that will be a beneficial long-term relationship. Customer equity means the combined discounted customer lifetime values of all the company's current and potential customers.

Even though company has loyal customers, they still might not be profitable and some not loyal customers might be very profitable. So the question is who to acquire and retain. Kotler and Armstrong have defined how a company can classify the potential profitability of the customers and manage them accordingly. "Strangers" have low profitability and loyalty due to the company's products does not meet their needs and the company should simply not invest anything in them. "Butterflies" have profitability but not loyalty. Their needs meet the offering of the company but they are only around for a little while and therefore companies should use promotions to attract them and collect the profits while they are still around. "True Friends" are loyal and have the highest profit potential. This is a group that the companies should invest in as if treated correctly they will come back regularly and share their good experiences with others. "Barnacles" are highly loyal but not profitable. The fit between needs and offering is

limited and therefore if the company can turn them profitable no invest should be made. To sum the differentiation between different types of customers and different relationship management strategies; the goal is to have the right relationships with the right customers.

Potential profitability	High profitability	Butterflies Good fit between company's offering and customer's needs: high profit potential	True friends Good fit between company's offering and customer's needs : highest profit potential
	Low profitability	Strangers Little fit between company's offering and customers needs : lowest profit potential	Barnacles Limited fit between company's offering and customers needs: low profit potential
		Short term customers	Long-term customers
Project loyalty			

As marketers point out the importance of customer value, Brand value should also be considered. The American Marketing Association defines brand as "a name, term, sign, symbol or design, or a combination of these, intended to identify the goods or services of one seller or group of sellers, and to differentiate them from those of a competitor" (De Pelsmacker, Geuens, Van den Bergh, 2004). Branding a product does not only guarantee success and therefore there are certain conditions a successful brand needs to meet; they need to be differentiated and offer customers something diverse than the competitor; they need to have added value meaning that not only the product should be high quality but service that comes along; they have to be innovative and answer the changing tastes of customers before the competition does; and finally a successful brand has to have total support of the management, employees and long-term, consistent communication (De Pelsmacker, Geuens, Van den Bergh, 2004).

3 Results

The following statistics represent the results of the questionnaire conducted in Vero Moda Iso Omena during 11.2.-17.2.2013. The sample was 20 filled questionnaires. The statistics can be found in Appendix 3.

The research wanted to define the average age of the Vero Moda Iso Omena visitors and the results was that 20 % of the visitors belong to the age group 15 to 19 years, 50 % to age group 20 to 24 years, 20 % to age group 25 to 29 years, 5 % to age group 30 to 34 years and 5 % 35 to 39 years. None of the respondents belonged to the age groups under 15 or over 40.

The results of the survey determined that the average age of the shop visitor is 20-24 years due to 50% of the respondents fell to this category. This also represents that the average visitor of the shop falls into the target group of Vero Moda brand. The research additionally showed that there is a relationship between age group and preferred communication channel since the age categories over 30 were members of the VM member's club but respondents under 20 preferred to follow Facebook.

When the respondents were asked the frequency of visits to the shop, none of them visited the shop daily. 30 % of the visitors came 2-4 times a week, 15% 5-6 times a week, 25% once a week, 10% few times a month and 25 % more seldom.

The average visitor of Vero Moda Iso Omena comes to the shop 2-4 times a week but there was also a large portion of the visitors who came very seldom. There was no relationship determined between the frequencies of visits to the fact that they follow newsletter, advertisement etc. of Vero Moda. Nevertheless there was a clear relationship with the fact that the more frequent visitors, at least once a week, mentioned that they come to the shop due to excellent customer service and location whereas the more seldom visitors came due to the products only.

30% of the respondents were members of the Vero Moda member's club and only 25% followed the newsletters and txt-messages coming from the member's club. Thus 70% were not members and 75% did not follow any communication from the member's club. Then again 40% of the respondents were fans of Vero Moda Finland Facebook-page.

When the respondents were asked to determine where they receive the information about promotions or campaigns in Vero Moda shops the majority, 30%, received the information directly in the shop, 20% got the information from the member club mailings, 25 % from Vero Moda Finland facebook page, 20% from friends, and 5% from magazine adverts. When they were asked what sort of promotions they would want to see in Vero Moda shops in the future 50% stated that they would wish to see more discounts, 35% wished for more members' club events, 10% wished to see celebrity guests and 55 wished for giveaways.

Since the Member's club is the main channel of communication of Vero Moda brand it was interesting to discover that most of the visitors were not members of the club and therefore could not receive the communication through it. The research showed that if the visitor was a member then they did follow the newsletter and messages. This result was rather surprising since the researcher and the client had assumed that more visitors would be member's but just ignored the messages from the club. Additionally there was a relationship between being a Facebook fan of VM Finland and receiving information form the page. The major source of information was determined to be the shop itself. These results determined that the most effective communication tools are Facebook, customer club and the shop.

Excellent customer service was determined to be most influencing factor that makes visitors return to Vero Moda Iso Omena since 55% of the respondents made that statement. Location, 35%, and Products, 40%, were also major factors. This was an open question in the questionnaire and the respondents additionally mentioned interesting product presentation, frequency of new products coming to the shop and expertise of the sales personnel.

Discounts were the most frequently mentioned, 45%, feature that would make the visitors to come to VM Iso Omena more often. 30% of the respondents hoped for more advertisement as 20% for more events. 5% asked for more personal customer service. These results and the fact that most of the visitors of VM Iso Omena return due to customer service, the shop should keep the level of personal customer service high. Nonetheless as 30% wished for more advertisement it is clear that the main communi-

cation tools should be more promoted to the visitors as well as used more effectively. If the shop would increase the number of club members, the more customers would be reached in addition to more Facebook fans and this would result to more effective communication. Moreover the visitors wished for customer club events. This would give them additional value to the products and make them feel more special as they would receive something extra for belonging to a club.

When the respondent were asked to state whether they had heard about few promotions in Iso Omena Vero Moda and if yes, where had they received the information, the majority had not noticed any communication about the promotions. Only 40% had seen any communication from a Christmas pre-sale and the rest none. Of these 40%, three thirds had gotten the information from Facebook event and the rest from sales personnel and friends. Happy Hour Fridays campaign only reached 25% with its communication. From these 25% over a half received the information from a flier and rest through Facebook and member's Club. 80% of the respondents had not seen any promotional material or communication from Forever Friends campaign and 75% from the 20% who had, noticed the campaign in the shops and the rest from Facebook. From these results it can be concluded that the communication of these campaigns have not been sufficient enough and therefore the marketing communication should be improved.

4 Conclusion and Recommendations

So, to what extent the amount of store visitors can be increased by marketing tools then? As the chart, Appendix 1, shows there is not a continuous relationship between a marketing activity or a campaign and number of visitors. In some cases the visitor index has been greater during a campaign but not merely in all of the cases. Additionally the chart demonstrates that the number of visitors is not directly related to sales. In some weeks the visitor index is severely lower compared to previous year whereas the sales index is clearly higher. This can be explained for example by personal selling, oral communication and presentation that the sales personnel give when selling the good or service of the company. As it was discovered in the questionnaire people mostly are attracted to sales and discounts. Nevertheless companies can't always offer discounts

and therefore it is up to the sales personnel to make the sales. Additionally the respondents stated that it is the customer service that keeps them coming back

The current market situation in Finland answers the question of why is the number of store visitors declining. As mentioned in the Literature review a few big international retailers have emerged and taken over the 1,8 billion women's clothing markets in the Finnish street view (Kilpailu- ja kuluttajavirasto, 2007). Hence the increased number of competition and the rapid growth of online fashion stores are main reasons of declining number of customers.

The research aimed to discover the best channels of marketing to reach Vero Moda Iso Omena's customers. According to the research the most effective communication tools are Facebook, customer club and the shop. The research showed that the number of customer club members was not that high and therefore it should increase the number of members to reach their customers.

The research showed that discounts are the most favored promotions in Vero Moda Iso Omena. Additionally Events for member's club members were mentioned since they give additional value to customers. The chart similarly states that if there was a discount promotion in a certain week, the visitor index and turnover index were higher compared to last year. For example sale in the summer of 2012 resulted in a visitor index of 105, a 5% increase, and sales index of 104, a 4% increase. On the other hand some campaigns did attract more visitors but did not result an increase in turnover. For example during Geller-campaign in week 33 2012, the store had 11% more visitors compared to 2011 but 23 % less sales than the same week in 2011.

It can be interpreted from the research that marketing does affect the turnover of the store more than the number of store visitors. There were more marketing activities in 2012 than in 2011. The total visitor index was 94 the total turnover index was 97. In other words the visitors decreased 6 % from year but turnover only 3 %.

20% of the respondents wished for more events in the store. This states that it could be beneficial to organise more tailored promotions to stores. As 35% of the respondents stated location for the main reason to visit Vero Moda Iso Omena it can be argued

that many of the visitors are “regulars” and visit the store often. As mentioned in the results there was clear relationship with the fact that the more frequent visitors, at least once a week, mentioned that they come to the shop due to excellent customer service and location whereas the more seldom visitors came due to the products only.

A general feeling of the research was that the visitors of Vero Moda Iso Omena were clearly not getting enough information, but do wish for it. Additionally since the excellent customer service is what attracts visitors to return, that is what the customers expect and want. Customer service is also the key to attracting more visitors. The store needs to increase the number of customer club members and through that spread information on promotions and campaigns widely as possible. After the store should organise tailored promotions to its visitors and remain their level of customer service throughout the process. The store should maintain the relationship with “True Friends”, the loyal group that will come back regularly and share their good experiences with others (Kotler & Armstrong, 2008). They should also attract “Butterflies” and try to retain them. As mentioned in the literature review retaining customers and gaining loyalty makes economic sense since even if a single purchase of a loyal customer might not be as large, if they keep returning to you that will be a beneficial long-term relationship. Since already stated in the literature review, successful companies need to be differentiated and offer customers something diverse than the competitor; they need to have added value meaning that not only the product should be high quality but service that comes along (De Pelsmacker, Geuens, Van den Bergh, 2004). The customer service that has already been proven to be excellent in Vero Moda Iso Omena is their competitive advantage and differentiates them from competitors. Since customer service or personal selling is not part of the concept of many fashion retailers.

Based on the findings of this research the following Promotions plan has been compiled. It includes an activity calendar and a marketing communication plan for a period of March 2013 to June 2013. The activities and communication tools have been designed on the basis of findings on the survey; effective communication methods, preferred promotions and the client’s wishes.

Marketing communication plan and Activity Calender for Vero Moda Iso Omena for March-June 2013.

March	Collect new customer club members, Power Friday 5-6.3
April	VIP event "Girls night out 18.4"
May	Styling focus , Blogger styles
June	Presale for Customer club members, Sneak Peak for VIP's

March 2013

Focus: In March 2013 Vero Moda Iso Omena will focus on attracting new members for the Vero Moda member's club.

Action: Shop personnel will be responsible for collecting as many new members as possible.

Marketing communication: Point-of-sale advertisement on VM Member's club, sales personnel, Vero Moda Finland Facebook post about advantages on membership and how to join.

Event: Power Friday 8.3

Action: Special products, discounts, special offers

Marketing communication: Member's club e-mail and txt-message, VM Finland Facebook posts, Vero Moda Iso Omena will post on Iso Omena Facebook page, in-store material

April 2013

Event: VIP-event for Member's club members "Girls night out" 18.4.2013

Action: on Thursday 18.4 at 19.00 the shop will close from regular customers and there will be a club member event. The event will include a discount of -20% on all normal priced products, fashion show on the latest trends, Jack&Jones male staff waiters, drinks and snacks and sales personnel will help to choose the trendiest new outfits for the spring.

Marketing communication: Member's club e-mail and txt-message, Vero Moda Finland and Iso Omena Facebook page and Additional Facebook event.

May 2013

Focus: Styling service will be the main focus of the month in Vero Moda shops. The shops will compete on who gets the greatest number of styling customers. "Get the look for spring parties".

Action: The sales personnel will promote the styling service of their own shop to shop visitors and try to gain as many clients as possible.

Marketing communication: In-store material, VM Finland Facebook page, Member's club e-mail and txt-message.

Event: "Styled By..." a fashion blogger will come and style Vero Moda Iso Omena customers.

Action: To attract more styling customers VM Iso Omena will have a fashion blogger to style the customers and help them to choose the best outfits for the spring's parties.

Marketing communication: Facebook event, VM Finland Facebook page.

June 2013

Event: Presale for customer club members

Action: Before summer sale starts on 24.6 at 10.00 the customer club members have the chance to come and buy the sales collection with -70% discount for a period of one hour starting from 9.00.

Marketing communication: Facebook event, Member's club e-mail and txt-message.

Event: Sneak Peak for VIP's

Action: After the summer sale all the novelties will be available for invited customer club members for a period of one hour starting from 9.00. They will have an exclusive opportunity to see and buy the novelties for the fall collection before the shop opens for everyone at 10.00.

Marketing communication: Facebook event, Member's club e-mail and txt-message.

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Chart of Visitors and Turnover 2011-2012

month	date	week	event	visitor index	turnover index	month	date	week	event
january 2011	3.-9.1	vko 1	sale	70	140	january 2012	2.-8.1	vko 1	sale
	10.-16.1	vko 2	sale	90	89		9.-15.1	vko 2	sale
	17.-23.1	vko 3		101	121		16.-22.1	vko 3	
	24.-30.1	vko 4		95	105		23.-29.1	vko 4	
				87	114				
february 2011	31.1-6.2	vko 5		119	97	february 2012	30.1-5.2	vko 5	
	7.-13.2	vko 6	Friends forever campaign	87	82		6.-12.2	vko 6	
	14.-20.2	vko 7		86	87		13.-19.2	vko 7	Friends forever campaign
	21.-27.2	vko 8		86	89		20.-26.2	vko 8	
				93	89				
march 2011	28.2-6.3	vko 9	Shopping center activity	79	76	march 2012	27.2-4.3	vko 9	Shopping center activity
	7.-13.3	vko 10		112	99		5.-11-3	vko 10	
	14.-20.3	vko 11		91	73		12.-18.3	vko 11	
	21.-27.3	vko 12		93	85		19.-25.3	vko 12	
				92	82				
april 2011	28.3-3.4	vko 13		87	87	april 2012	26.3-1.4	vko 13	
	4.-10.4	vko 14		62	65		2.-8.4	vko 14	
	11.-17.4	vko 15		73	81		9.-15.4	vko 15	
	18.-24.4	vko 16		92	133		16.-22.4	vko 16	Power Friday
				78	88				
may 2011	25.4-1.5	vko 17		102	98	may 2012	23.-29.4	vko 17	Styling campaign
	2.-8.5	vko 18		82	81		30.4-6.5	vko 18	
	9.-15.5	vko 19		78	82		7.-13.5	vko 19	
	16.-22.5	vko 20		83	99		14.-20.5	vko 20	
	23.-29.5	vko 21		58	97		21.-27.5	vko 21	
				74	90				
june 2011	30.5-5.6	vko 22		128	107	june 2012	28.5-3.6	vko 22	
	6.-12.6	vko 23		129	95		4.-10.6	vko 23	
	13.-19.6	vko 24		98	103		11.-17.6	vko 24	
	20.-26.6	vko 25		107	66		18.-24.6	vko 25	
				114	92				
july 2011	27.6-3.7	vko 26	sale	59	89	july 2012	25.6-1.7	vko 26	sale
	4.-10.7	vko 27	sale	170	114		2.-8.7	vko 27	sale
	11.-17.7	vko 28		65	90		9.-15.7	vko 28	Wonder-campaign
	18.-24.7	vko 29		96	85		16.-22.7	vko 29	
	25.-31.7	vko 30		87	74		23.-29.7	vko 30	
				107	91				
august 2011	1.-7.8	vko 31		87	90	august 2012	30.7-5.8	vko 31	
	8.-14.8	vko 32		85	93		6.-12.8	vko 32	
	15.-21.8	vko 33		111	77		13.-19.8	vko 33	Geller-campaign
	22.-28.8	vko 34	Peces supersale	114	123		20.-26.8	vko 34	
				98	94				
september 2011	29.8-4.9	vko 35	Shopping center activity	79	100	september 2012	27.8-2.9	vko 35	Shopping center activity
	5.-11.9	vko 36		105	104		3.-9.9	vko 36	Takkikampanja
	12.-18.9	vko 37		91	105		10.-16.9	vko 37	
	19.-25.9	vko 38		74	79		17.23.9	vko 38	
				85	97				
october 2011	26.9-2.10	vko 39		97	134	october 2012	24.-30.9	vko 39	Vero Moda 25 y -campaign
	3.-9.10	vko 40		120	134		1.-7.10	vko 40	
	10.-16.10	vko 41		109	101		8.-14.10	vko 41	
	17.-23.10	vko 42		87	116		15.-21.10	vko 42	
	24.-30.10	vko 43		125	109		22.-28.10	vko 43	Shopping center activity
				108	114				
november 2011	31.10-6.11	vko 44		95	141	november 2012	29.10-4.11	vko 44	
	7.-13.11	vko 45		105	99		5.-11.11	vko 45	Power Friday
	14.-20.11	vko 46		89	104		12.-18.11	vko 46	
	21.-27.11	vko 47		99	132		19.-25.11	vko 47	
				96	116				
december 2011	28.11-4.12	vko 48		88	114	december 2012	26.11-2.12	vko 48	
	5.-11.12	vko 49		118	107		3.-9.12	vko 49	
	12.-18.12	vko 50		85	84		10.-16.12	vko 50	
	19.-25.12	vko 51		126	136		17.-23.12	vko 51	
	26.12-1.1	vko 52	sale	72	102		24.30.12	vko 52	sale
				103	105				
Total 2011				94	97	Total 2012			

Which age category do you belong to?

- How often do you visit Vero Moda Iso Omena ?

- Are you a member of the Vero Moda Iso Omena Member's club?

- Do you follow the newsletters, text messages coming from the VM member's club?

- Are you a fan of the Vero Moda Finland facebook page?

- Where do you get the information about campaigns, promotions or event in Vero Moda stores?

- What sort of promotions would you like to see in Vero Moda Iso Omena in the future? you can pick 2

- What makes you return to Vero Moda Iso Omena?

What would make you visit the shop more often?

- Vero Moda Iso Omena has organized a few events over the past few months. Please state have you heard about the event and where did you get the information.

Presale for member's club members

- ## Happy Hour Fridays

- ## Forever Friends -campaign

- A) no B) yes, where? _____

Mihin ikäkategoriaan kuulut?

- | | | | |
|------------|----------|-----------|----------|
| A) Alle 15 | B) 15-19 | C) 20-24 | D) 25-29 |
| E) 30-34 | F) 35-39 | G) yli 40 | |

Kuinka usein vieraillet Vero Moda Iso Omenassa?

- | | | | |
|---------------|------------------------|--------------------|----------------------------|
| A) Päivittäin | B) 2-5 kertaa viikossa | C) Kerran viikossa | D) Pari kertaa kuukausessa |
| | E) Kerran kuukaudessa | F) Harvemmin | |

Kuulutko Vero Moda Member's Clubiin?

- A) Kyllä B) Ei

Seuraatko Vero Moda Member's Clubin uutiskirjeitä ja tekstiviestejä?

- A) Kyllä B) Ei

Oletko Vero Moda Finland Facebook-sivujen fani?

- A) Kyllä B) Ei

Mistä saat tiedon Vero Moda liikkeessä olevista tapahtumista, alennuksista tai kampanjoista?

- | | |
|--|-----------------------------|
| A) Member's clubin uutiskirjeet ja tekstiviestit | B) Vero Moda liikkeet |
| C) Vero Moda Finland Facebook-sivut | D) Lehtimainokset |
| E) Flaijerit | F) Iso Omena Facebook-sivut |
| G) Kaverit | F) Iso Omenan mainokset |

Millaisia promootioita haluaisit Vero Moda Isossa Omenassa tulevaisuudessa nähdä?

- | | |
|--|---|
| A) Alennuksia, esim kaikki tuotteet -20% | B) Tuotetarjouksia, esim. kahdet leggingsit 49,95 € |
| C) VIP-iltoja | D) Julkkisvieraita |
| E) Lahjoja | F) Muuta? _____ |

Mikä saa sinut palaamaan Vero Moda Iso Omenaan? esim. palvelu, tuotteet, sijainti yms

Mikä saisi sinut vierailemaan Vero Modassa useammin?

- | | | | |
|---------------|----------------------|-----------------|---------------------------|
| A) Alennukset | B) Enemmän mainontaa | C) Tapahtumat | D) Parempi asiakaspalvelu |
| | E) Paremmat tuotteet | F) Muuta? _____ | |

Vero Moda Iso Omena on järjestänyt muutamia tapahtumia liikkeessään syksyn aikana. Merkitse oletko osallistunut tapahtumaan vai et ja kirjoita mistä sait tiedon tapahtumasta, esim. uutiskirje, flaijeri, myyjät, Vero Moda Finland facebook-sivut, kaverit yms.

Presale-ennakkoale kanta-asiakkaille

- A) En B) Kyllä Mistä kuulit? _____

Happy Hour Fridays

- A) En B) Kyllä Mistä kuulit? _____

Forever Friends -kampanja

- A) En B) Kyllä Mistä kuulit? _____

Questionnaire Results

Which age category do you belong to?							
A) under 15	0 %	B) 15 to 19 years	20,00 %	C) 20 to 24 years	50,00 %	D) 25 to 29 years	20,00 %
E) 30 to 34 years	5,00 %	F) 35 to 39 years	5,00 %	G) 40+ years	0,00 %		
How often do you visit Vero Moda Iso Omena ?							
A) Everyday	0,00 %	B) 2-4 times a week	30,00 %	C) 5-6 times a week	15,00 %	D) Once a week	25,00 %
E) Few times a month	10,00 %	F) More seldom	25,00 %				
Are you a member of the Vero Moda Iso Omena Member's club?							
A) yes	30,00 %	B)no	70,00 %				
Do you follow the newsletters, text messages coming from the VM member's club?							
A) yes	25,00 %	B)no	75,00 %				
Are you a fan of the Vero Moda Finland facebook page?							
A) yes	40,00 %	B)no	60,00 %				
Where do you get the information about campaigns, promotions or event in Vero Moda stores?							
A) Member's club emails/text message		20,00 %	B) Vero Moda stores		30,00 %		
C) Vero Moda Finland Facebook page		25,00 %	D) Magazine Adverts		5,00 %		
E) Flyers		0,00 %	F) Iso Omena Facebook page		0,00 %		
G) Friends		20,00 %	H) Iso Omena Advertisement		0,00 %		
What sort of promotions would you like to see in Vero Moda Iso Omena in the future?							
A) Discounts f.ex -20%		50,00 %	B) Offers f.ex 2 pairs of leggings & 1 pair of shoes		0,00 %		
C) Member club events		35,00 %	D) Celebrities		10,00 %		
E) Giveaways		5,00 %	F) Special products		0,00 %		
What makes you return to Vero Moda Iso Omena?							
customer service		55,00 %	products		40,00 %	location 35,00 %	
What would make you visit the shop more often?							
A) Discounts	45,00 %	B) More advertising		30,00 %	C) Events		20,00 %
D) More customer service	5,00 %	E) More current products		55,00 %			
Vero Moda Iso Omena has organized a few events over the past few months.							
Please state have you heard about the event and where did you get the information.							
Presale for member's club members							
A) no	60,00 %	B)yes		40,00 %	Facebook 75%	sales personnel 12,5%	Friends 12,5%
Happy Hour Fridays							
A) no	75,00 %	B)yes		25,00 %	Facebook 20%	Flyer 60%	Member's club 20%
Forever Friends -campaign							
A) no	80,00 %	B)yes		20,00 %	Shop 75%	Facebook 25%	